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DOVER WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO EMBEZZLEMENT CHARGE

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE – U.S. Attorney Tom Colantuono, Portsmouth Police Chief Michael Magnant, and Special Agent in Charge of the Boston Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Kenneth W. Kaiser, announced today that Mary-Jo Hinkle pleaded guilty to bank fraud in connection with allegations that she embezzled over \$22,000 from her Portsmouth, New Hampshire employer, TVC, Inc. Hinkle, age 40, resides in Dover, New Hampshire.

During today's hearing, Hinkle admitted that around April 10, 2002, to on or about December 3, 2003, she drew checks against her employer's checking account payable to herself, cash and her creditors without her employer's authorization. In connection with her guilty plea, Hinkle also admitted that she concealed her scheme by falsifying the identities of the payees on the checks in her employer's financial records. Hinkle acknowledged that she drew approximately 44 checks in this fashion, converting \$22,603.78 to her personal benefit.

Hinkle's plea was accepted by United States District Court Judge Joseph A. DiClerico, Jr. Judge DiClerico scheduled Hinkle's sentencing for November 22, 2004. Bank fraud carries a maximum term of imprisonment of 30 years, though, under federal sentencing guidelines, Hinkle will likely receive a lesser sentence. Hinkle was released pending sentencing.

U.S. Attorney Colantuono stated: "Breaches of financial trust like those that occurred in this case are a significant impediment to commerce. My office is dedicated to the vigorous prosecution of such wrongdoing whenever it constitutes a violation of federal law."

The investigation was jointly conducted by the Portsmouth Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Bill Morse.